

Remarks. Yukio Takeuchi, Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of Japan

**Speech by Mr. Yukio Takeuchi, Charge'd Affaires of the Embassy
of Japan, at the First Earthquake Policy Symposium,
September 16,1996**

Honorable Director Witt, Minister Suzuki, Congressman Brown, Ladies
and Gentlemen:

On behalf of Ambassador Saito, who is currently back in Japan for consultations, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and respect to FEMA and to those of Japan and the United States whose excellent preparation has made this First Japan-U.S. Earthquake Symposium possible. Director Witt and Minister Suzuki have graciously introduced us to the development and the significance of our cooperation in the field of earthquake emergency management.

Japan and the United States enjoy a cooperative relationship closely tied together by a friendship that exists between the peoples of the two countries. We witnessed a clear example of such ties in January last year when the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake hit the Kansai region of Japan. Warm encouragement was conveyed from the American people in the Washington area, and from all over the country. This encouragement will long be remembered by the people of Japan.

I would like to take this opportunity, to extend our gratitude once again to Director Witt, who himself visited soon after the earthquake the affected sites and offered us invaluable advice.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Sometimes, economic problems, especially so called “frictions”, tend to attract more attention than necessary in our bilateral context. Yet we should be reminded that our two countries, as President Clinton often describes, have forged one of the closest alliances in the world. As allies, cooperation in the political and security spheres are critically important. And I am convinced that the meeting to be held on this Thursday between our Foreign and Defense Ministers, as a part of continuous dialogue on these issues, will bear meaningful results.

At the same time however, in the post-Cold-War era, the cooperation between the two countries to tackle global issues bears increasing importance. It is from this perspective, that in July, 1993 the then Prime Minister Miyazawa and President Clinton established a framework of active cooperation between the two countries, which is known as the “Japan-U.S. Common Agenda for Cooperation in Global Perspective”. Since then, the Common Agenda has developed into a framework of cooperation covering more than twenty areas with the participation of government agencies and private sectors, and can be described as the most successful case of bilateral cooperation. As you all know, this Symposium was agreed upon in June, 1995 by the leaders of the two countries in the wake of the Hanshin Earthquake as part of the Common Agenda.

In the Summit meeting in April this year, Prime Minister Hashimoto and President Clinton agreed to further expand the scope of the Common Agenda by adding six new areas. “Reduction of natural disaster” is one of these new areas. In addition to this Earthquake Policy Symposium there are currently two other projects under this area; the first is the Japan-U.S. Earthquake Disaster Mitigation Project on the development of technology to mitigate the dangers caused by earthquakes, and second is the Pan-Pacific Natural Disaster Watch Network for the development of a comprehensive system to monitor and forecast possible disasters in the Pacific region. This Symposium aims to review these programs and incorporate their fruits into disaster prevention policy and measures related to earthquakes.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As I understand, in the next coming three days, the Symposium will examine and identify the possibility of future cooperation, and at the Second Symposium, which is scheduled to be held in Japan next year, the measures for concrete cooperation will be announced. Therefore, this first Symposium is going to establish the very foundation on which future cooperation between the two countries at the policy and technical levels will be built. It is my sincere hope that discussion at this Symposium will be productive, thereby opening up the possibility to share the fruits of bilateral cooperation with other peoples of the rest of the world who face the threat of earthquake in the spirit of the Common Agenda in the global perspective.

Thank you very much.